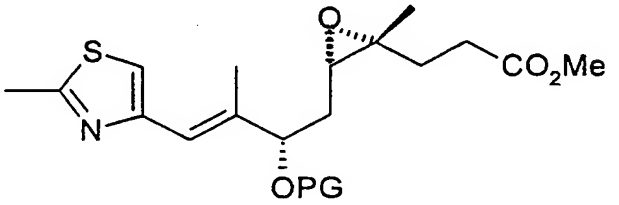
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. In a process for the production of epothilone compounds, the improvement comprising preparing said compounds by cyclization of a compound produced from an intermediate of formula II



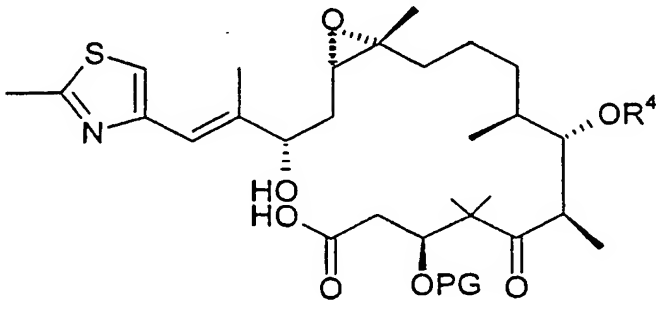
II

wherein PG is a protecting group.

2. The process according to claim 1, wherein PG is a TBS or TES group.

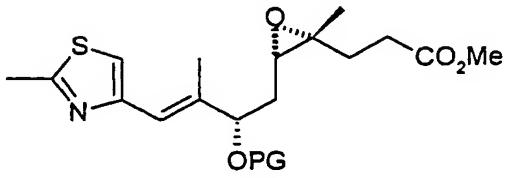
3. The process according to claim 1, wherein the compound of formula II contains a TBS group as PG, which group is changed to a TES group during the process.

4. The process according to claim 1, wherein said cyclization reaction is of a compound of the formula 21



21

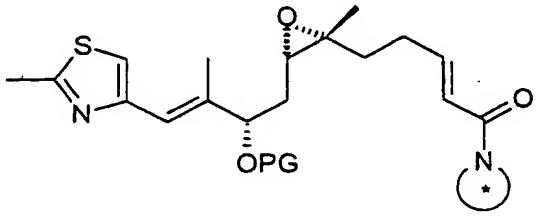
5. The process according to claim 4, wherein the compound of formula 21 is produced by a process comprising reducing a compound of formula 11



11

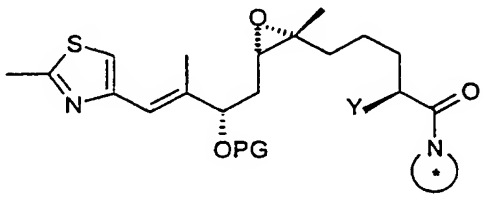
to form an aldehyde, coupling the aldehyde with a compound

to produce an enoylsultam of formula 12,



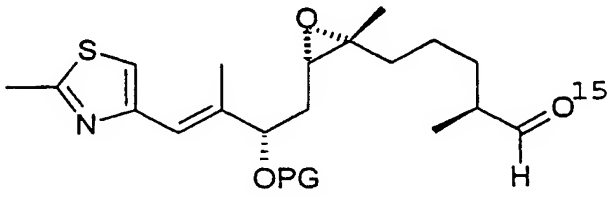
12

reacting enolysultam 12 with L-selectrides to produce compounds of formulae 13 and 14,

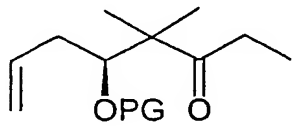


13 (Y=Me)
14 (Y=H)

reducing sultam 13 to form aldehyde 15,

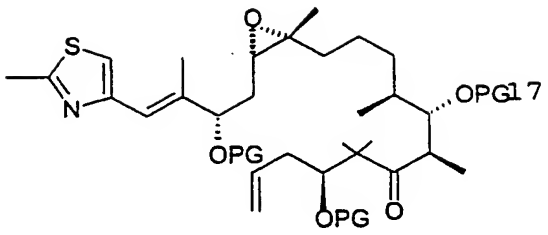


reacting 15 with ketone 16

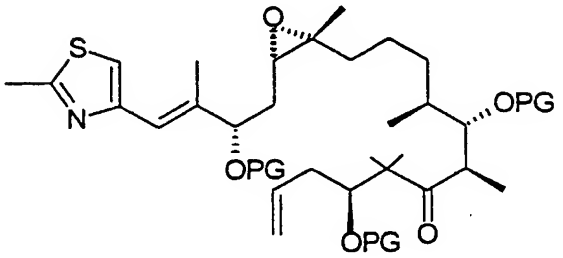


16

to form compound 17,

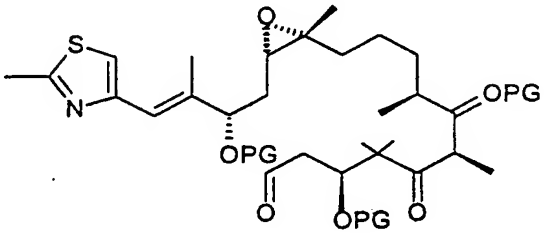


protecting the 17-OH group of compound 17 so as to produce alkene 18,



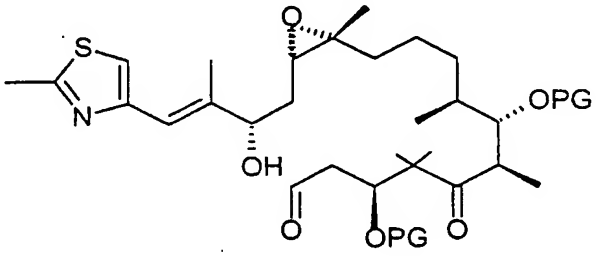
18

subjecting alkene 18 to dehydroxylation and glycocleavage to produce aldehyde 19,



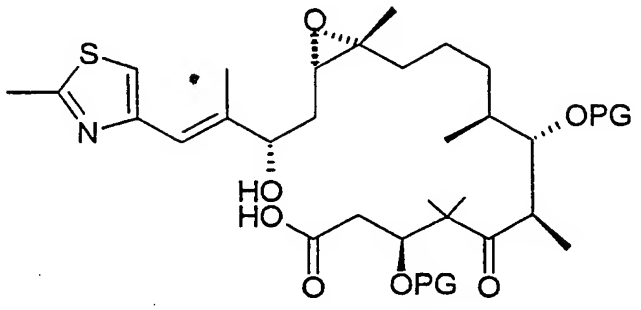
19

deprotecting the 15-position of aldehyde 19 to produce aldehyde 20,



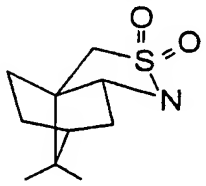
20

and subjecting aldehyde 20 to oxidation and macrolactonization to produce compound 21

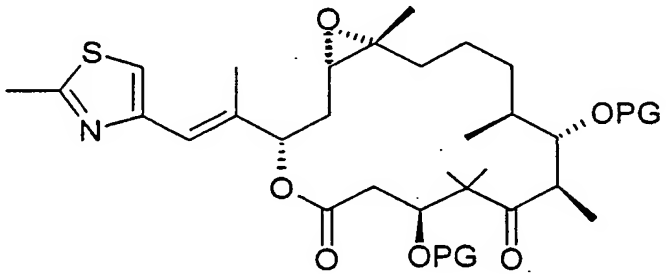


21

wherein each PG independently is a protecting group,

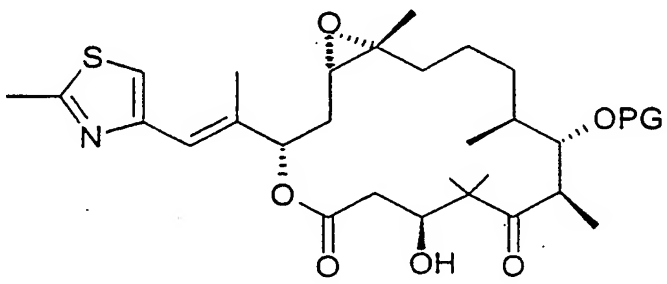
and  is 

6. A process according to claim 4, comprising cyclizing a compound of formula 21 to produce a macrolactone of formula 22



22

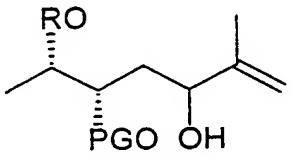
deprotecting the oxygen atom at the 3-position to form a compound of formula 23



23

and removing the protecting group at the 7-position to form epothilone B.

7. A compound of the formula 5 to 21



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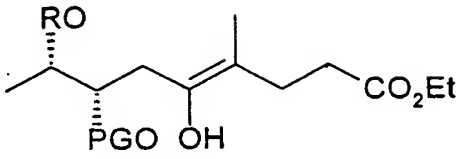

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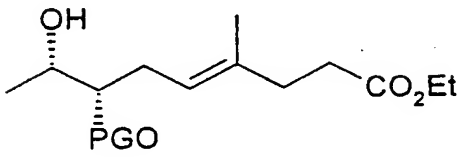

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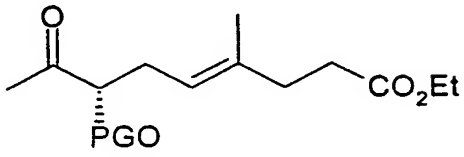

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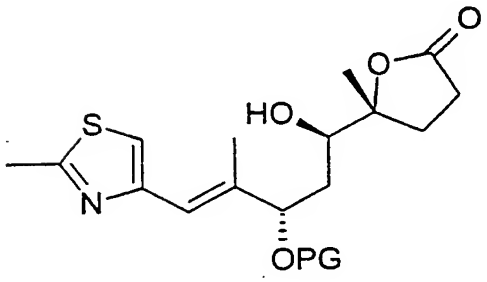

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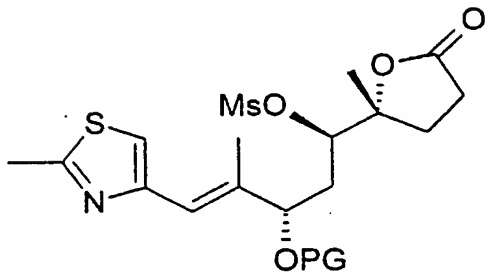

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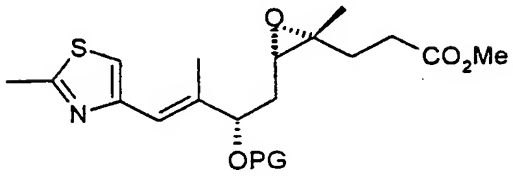

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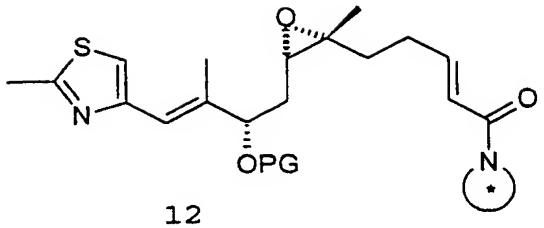

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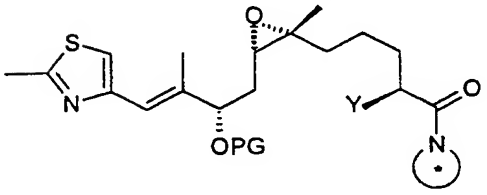
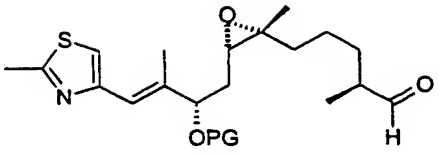


13 (Y=Me)

14 (Y=H)



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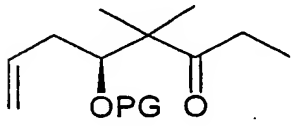

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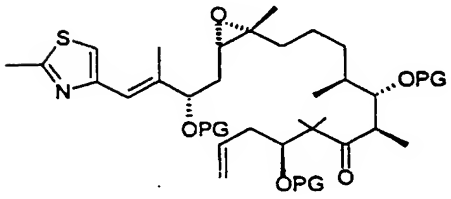

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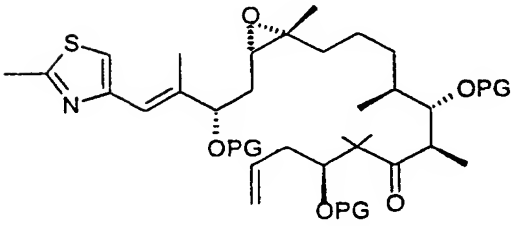

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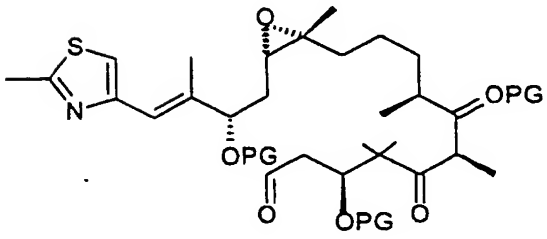

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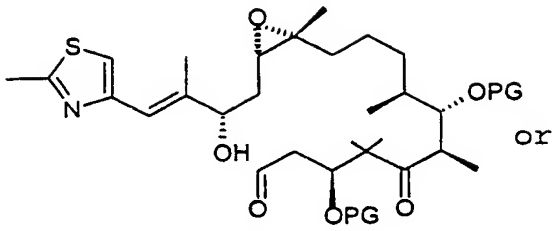
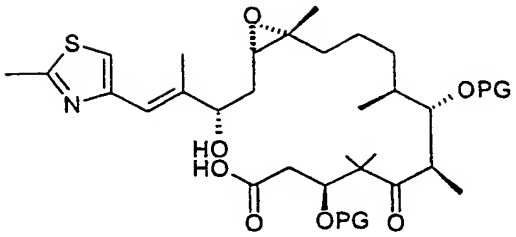
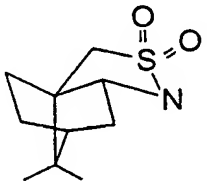


20 or



21

wherein PG is a protecting group,

-N* is 

and R is Bn or PMB.